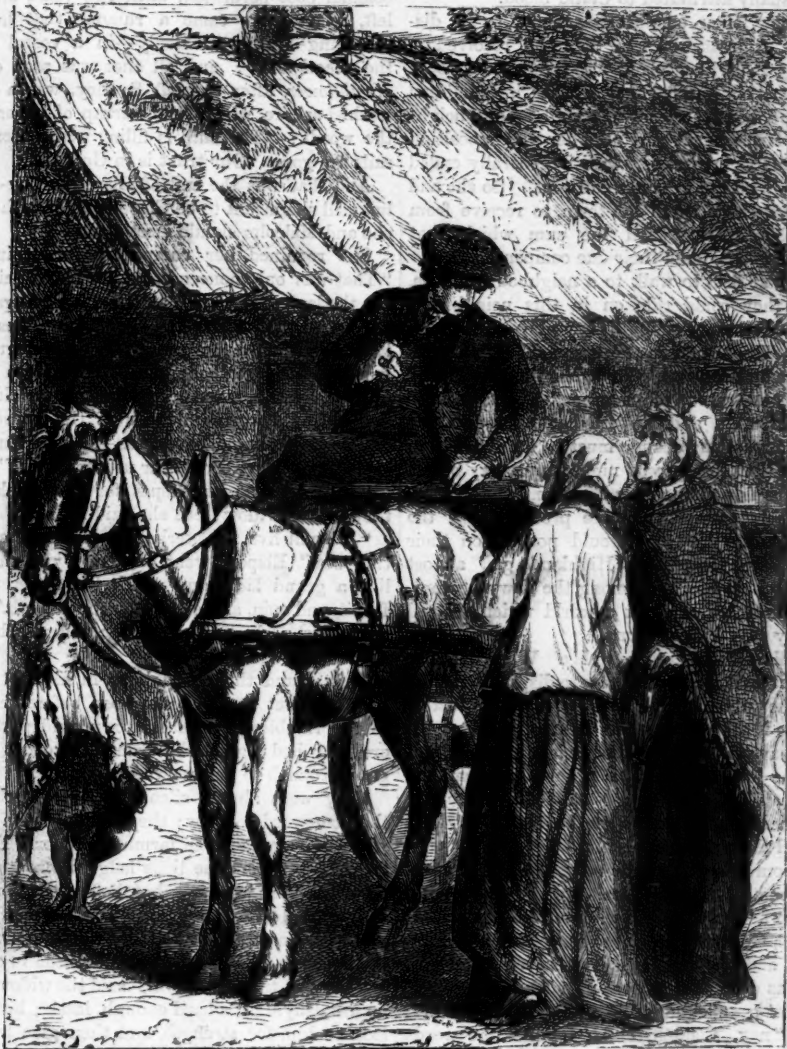


THE QUIVER

Saturday, August 3, 1867.



(Drawn by A. C. Gow.)

"They found their neighbour in his cart, ready for them."—p. 722.

THE VALUE OF CRONACH.

THE Widow M'Hamish and her daughter had seldom travelled beyond the hills which bounded their prospect to the scanty fields about their Highland farm. They found plenty of interest and work in the quiet nook where their lot was cast, for except one or two "men folk" for outdoor labour, the widow and her daughter kept the farm themselves. They were excellent company

to each other,—the widow had abundant stores of legendary lore, and she had given her daughter the best education in her power, and though Elspeth's reading was, of course, limited, it was not superficial, and she possessed all the originality and spirit usually attributed to Celtic blood.

But now, their comfort was about to be disturbed. A great proprietor near had resolved on annexing the widow's land, and though she would fain have kept the fields which her husband had cultivated, her experience of events among neighbouring farmers had convinced her that opposition was worse than useless, since it generally ended in the ruin of the weaker combatant. So she and Elspeth were going to the town, to receive from this nobleman's steward the sum which that gentleman considered their due compensation.

They had first to walk to a neighbour's house, whence they could ride on in this neighbour's wagon. Naturally enough, they were not in high spirits. The farm was the scene of their household joys and sorrows. There they had toiled, and spared, and cared, often in anxiety, sometimes nearly in want, and Elspeth had once or twice fancied almost any change must be for the better: but now that change was nigh, it was very bitter. The ownership of the rude house and sterile acres of Cronach, seemed far more precious than the little bag of cash they would possess on their return. The impulsive Highland girl almost longed to hide her face among the dewy heather, and never more confront a world which seemed suddenly very hard and cruel.

But Elspeth did not show this. When once the affair was settled, she took care to display its sunny side. She put on her trimmest apparel, and bustled about, as if the visit to town was really the treat it might have been, under other circumstances, and when she joined her mother in the best room, and glanced at the one looking-glass of the house, she was almost astonished to see how little her face betrayed the pain in her heart.

"Of course we cannot altogether like it," she said to her mother, wisely admitting what she could not deny: "for there is no place like old places; but, still, Cronach was once strange to our grandfathers, and the new home—wherever it be—will be just as dear to our great-grandchildren."

"Great-grandchildren!" echoed the widow, sadly; "nay, Elspeth, child, I know the words are true, that 'Hope deferred maketh the heart sick,' and so, Elspeth, I warn you to give up all expectation of Malcolm Peder's return; and well I know you will marry no other."

For just one moment Elspeth M'Hamish turned her face aside. In her eager consolation she had uttered heedless words; for that young girl of two-and-twenty had no dreams of a careful, matronly future. Four years before, ere a certain Malcolm

Peder had departed for Australia, a long quiet conversation between he and she had ended in a promise, that when he returned, he would find her still Elspeth M'Hamish.

She heard from him as often as the fluctuating colonial post permitted, until two years after he left, when there came a rumour that he was returning—rather suddenly—in a vessel called the *Heathflower*; and all that was seen of the *Heathflower*, after she left Sydney, was a bottle washed ashore, which held a scrap of paper, with the words: "The ship is filling with water—her sails are gone. Our trust is in God."

And that was the end of Elspeth's love-story; but still she meant to be Elspeth M'Hamish when she and Malcolm should meet again!

She regained her composure in an instant. "That was only nonsense, mother," she said; "I am the last of our race, and had all things gone on the same, Cronach and the M'Hamishes must have parted in a few years. We might grieve if you had sons, mother; but, as it is, I am not so brave as you are, and if you had grown old here, and I had become mistress of the house, how frightened I should have been—I—who start if a straying stranger come near us after dark!"

"Only because she hopes for poor Malcolm," thought the widow; but she said nothing.

"We will live at Peterhead—close to the beautiful sea," Elspeth went on, "and you shall sit like a grand lady, and watch the ships, whilst I knit, and spin, and embroider for us both."

"It is she who will watch the ships!" thought the mother, again.

They found their neighbour in his cart ready for them; but it was quite noon before they got to the rambling Highland town, and past noon ere they had signed the formidable deeds which gave Cronach to a new owner.

They were almost silent during the whole of the homeward journey; they did not even speak when they reached the farmhouse door. Elspeth took the key from the little ledge where it always lay when they were out, but before they entered, they paused and gazed around. It was a lovely scene—it was the home of their forefathers—and the house to which Malcolm Peder used to come.

"It's just the Lord's will," said the widow; "it's no use denying it's hard enough, lassie; but let us look to him for strength, and then give him the glory!"

"Oh, if it were Bible-days!" sobbed Elspeth, "then angels might come to change all the trouble into joy! But those times are over now!"

"Don't say that, Elsie," said the widow, quickly, "the Lord always works his own will in his own way, and if the ways change, the will doesn't, and it's our Father's will, lassie! Angels' visits were wonderful eno', but not more wonderful than the

working together of what we call little common things. We don't know where we're going, Elsie, nor what will happen; but the Lord does, and when he shows us, we shall see everything has drawn towards that end like a plan."

Then they went into the house, and without another word about the coming change, resumed their usual round of duties.

It was autumn: and the evenings were drawing in, and becoming chilly. Elspeth lit a little fire, beside which she and her mother sat and worked, having carefully deposited "the value of Cronach" in the old carved chest. It had grown quite dark out of doors, when the daughter's quick ear detected an unusual sound outside.

"Only the falling leaves," said the widow.

But they both listened, and the noise was repeated; it was like an animal's whine, accompanied by divers scratchings on the door.

"I think it's a dog," said Elspeth. They had none of their own; an ancient favourite having died not long before.

The widow opened the window to see their singular visitor. It was a large black dog, who bounded towards her with every demonstration of joy, and as she put forth her hand to caress him, he actually leaped through the casement!

"The M'Hamishes never turned away a guest, nor asked questions," said the widow as she prepared food for the panting stranger, "so it doesn't matter that their visitor can't answer. But still this is odd, Elsie—he's none of the neighbours' dog."

"No, and if he belonged to a traveller, it's little likely he'd leave his master to come to a strange house. He's a fine fellow, and seems nearly as fond of us as poor Mona was. But what shall we do with him, mother?"

"Give him supper and lodging if he likes," said Mrs. M'Hamish, "and see what to-morrow brings. He'd be welcome to stay at Cronach, but he'd be out of place in Peterhead lodgings; yet as we needn't think of that now, we won't."

An old plaid, which had been Mona's sleeping-cushion, was brought out for the dog, who seemed highly satisfied in his new quarters, and gave no sign of remembrance of a master out of doors. Before Mrs. M'Hamish and her daughter retired, he was curled up in a sound slumber.

They went up-stairs to their simple chamber, and for some time they lay whispering together, and gazing on the broad harvest moon, as she rode peacefully over the giant hills, and then they sank to sleep.

But in the dead of night, they were suddenly awakened; their faces blanched as they listened, for they heard the stealthy steps of midnight robbers in the garden-path, followed in a second by a sharp crash, which announced that the primitive fastenings of the outer door were forced away.

"The money in the chest!" gasped Elspeth, as she clung to her mother's hand.

But in an instant there arose a fierce and indescribable tumult, overturning of furniture, shrieks, oaths, and growlings unutterable. Startled from their sleep, neither mother nor daughter could at first understand the position of things, but they were soon explained by shouts below.

"You said there wasn't a dog, and there's a horrible brute—yah—h—h!"

"Come out, come out! there must be some one staying there—come away, for your lives!"

They tramped away, furiously banging the door to keep back the dog, and hurried down the rough path, cursing as they went. When the subdued growls of their protector reassured the two women, they got a light and crept down-stairs. They found the strange dog in an ecstasy of delight, the chairs overturned, some crockery smashed, and torn linen strewn over the floor, but the oaken chest, containing the tempting "value of Cronach," was untouched.

"Wherever you came from, God sent you," said, Elspeth, caressing the dog.

"Yes,—as he sent the angels in olden times," whispered the widow, gently.

They could not go to bed again, but sat close together and read the Bible until daylight; then they took a little breakfast, and fed the dog, and Elspeth persuaded the mother to get some rest, while she put the kitchen into something like order.

She moved about in that dreamy condition which follows a troubled night. In the mirror she saw a face so wan and worn, that she scarcely recognised it as her own. Ghostly footsteps seemed to follow hers, and when she sat down, she feared to turn her head. It was great relief when John Munro, the farm-servant, came from his hut, and she could relate their adventure, and show their strange guardian, who, though by no means hostile towards the worthy Scotchman, offered him none of the friendly overtures he had made to Elspeth and her mother. Then, reassured by John's trusty presence, she returned to the kitchen, sat down, and soon fell asleep.

She awoke suddenly: the room was bright with sunshine, and John Munro stood at her side, his "bonnet" in his hand, and an awed look on his weatherbeaten face.

"The Lord's been vera guid to you, Miss Elspeth," he said, solemnly. "After his wonderfu' providence the night, ye'll no' doubt aught too guid for his lovingkindness the morn."

"The Lord is very good to us," said Elspeth, mistily; "you know I think so, John."

"When you thocht of the resurrection day, miss dearie, has it no been sweet to ye to ken that then the sea wad gie up its dead?"

"John, what do you mean?" she exclaimed.

"Wist! wist!" he said, laying his hand on her arm,— "don't ye flutter so—the Lord's gudeness doesna vanish like a fairy favour; an' when he sends us back our missing ones, they're in the flesh, an' na will-o'-the-wisp ghaists."

In another moment, Elspeth M'Hamish was sobbing in the embrace of Malcolm Peder, and her mother was aroused by sounds very different from those of the night.

"I did not take passage in the *Heathflower*," he explained, as he sat between them, "but in it I sent home half of my savings, to pay my poor father's debts, and as they are now at the bottom of the sea, I have come home with the remainder, for I could not rest while any one could say he had lost by my people. And so I'm still a poor man, Elspeth: I must begin again out there as poor as ever."

What did she care for that?

"You should get a bride with a tocher," said the widow, with apparent gravity.

"No, no," he replied, pressing Elspeth's hand, "the Peders were always ready to work for money, or want it,—but not to marry or love for it."

"We've told you we're going to leave Cronach," said Mrs. M'Hamish, "but I don't believe you've given it two thoughts. Perhaps you will, when I tell you we mean to take a farm in Australia."

Elspeth had never heard this before, and she started quite as much as Malcolm.

"But I'm ower old to manage a farm," the widow added, "and so I shall e'en find an honest, sensible man to do it for me. I've one in my mind now, but it all depends upon himself; his name is just Malcolm Peder."

"It's the Lord's plan," she said, after the first ecstasies of thankful joy were over. "I should not have thought of selling Cronach, if I had not been obliged by the guidings of Providence; and then the strange dog was sent to guard us in our danger—and so we and our little wealth are safe and sure, when Malcolm is restored to us. Elspeth, is the Lord's arm shortened that it cannot save?"

"I'm speiring after that bonny dog," said John, putting his head in at the door; "I cannot find him no gate. Will Miss Elspeth ca'?"

But all John's "speiring" and all Elspeth's calls never brought him back. As he came, so he went. The would-be robbers were detected through the injuries he had done their apparel and themselves, and the tale spread far and wide; but no one was found able to account for the animal's mysterious appearance, or departure, and to this day it remains "a strange story."

Mrs. M'Hamish tells it to her grandchildren, as they sit in an Australian farmhouse, with their father's fields stretching far and wide around. She is very proud of those fields, and though she still says "there is no place like the old place," she does not regret that some of them were bought by "the value of Cronach."

I. F.

ERE THEY DIE.

FAIR frail feet on the stony road,
A wild light in the sky;
Fear and hope, which sting and goad,
Ere they die—ere yet they die.

Oh, woman, speed thee, speed!
Thy bleeding feet should fly;
For the need is a deadly need,
Ere they die—ere yet they die.

Now straining up the hill,
With that beacon red on high;
But they live—are breathing still—
Ere they die—ere yet they die.

Now the heat is on her cheek,
And burning lip and eye;
O God! for breath to shriek,
Ere they die—ere yet they die.

The flames have girt them round;
Hark to that hopeless cry!
She hath flung her to the ground,
And not alone they die.

Cold are these ashes now;
Oh, let them by her lie.
Poor branded heart and brow!
What couldst thou do but die?

J. S. W.

THE TRAVAIL OF CHRIST'S SOUL.

BY THE REV. G. A. CHADWICK, M.A.

THE greatest of all mysteries is the mystery of the existence of sin. That infinite holiness, armed with infinite power, should exist in the same universe with depravity, has perplexed the religious minds of every age and nation—

Hindoos, Turks, Greeks, and Romans at least as much as Israelites and Christians. The gulf is too great for us to fathom. The wisest and the holiest of mankind have together gazed intently into it, and not seen a glimmer of light; while profound speculations and elaborate reasonings

have been incessantly dropped, like plummets, into the abyss; yet not an echo has told any ear that they have ever struck the bottom.

Closely akin to this is the mystery of pain. That infinite love should co-exist with sorrow, is almost as perplexing as that infinite holiness should co-exist with sin. These are the great trials and great opportunities of Faith. In the silence of Reason, she lifts up her voice, while her face is veiled with her wings. She refuses to pry into the secret things of God; but refuses also to doubt the truth of his holiness and love, which she understands, because of mysteries which lie beyond her range: for she knows that the answer to these problems is reserved for a world of clearer faculties and brighter light. It is written in characters in which we have no skill; and, after a thousand efforts, the unknown letters stand dread and awful still.

But we, who are compelled to meet this terrible perplexity at every turn, are not left alone to meet it. Christ has traversed the same path before us, and he gives us, not alone help, but sympathy, and the knowledge that pain is not inflicted upon us by an unconcerned bystander, but in all tenderness by One who knows what it is to be weary and bereaved, thwarted and despised, to languish and to die.

We cannot explain sorrow to the sceptic, and neither can he to us; but—which is far more practical—we can claim alleviations that he never knew; while the issue of all holy sorrow is not obscurely foreshadowed by the issue of our Lord's.

The greatest human grief was not endured in vain. Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews, looks back without a sigh from his eternal exaltation upon his stormy and agitated life below; and we, when we know even as we are known, shall also be thankful for the ills we have wept through here, and confess, not in faith alone, but in the deeper certainty of sight, that "He doeth all things well." "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied," said the prophet, who most of all comprehended the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.

The words are well worthy of our deepest meditation; and, in examining them, two prominent ideas catch the eye. 1. Faithful souls are "the travail" of Christ's soul. 2. He shall see them and be satisfied.

I. The saved are "the travail of his soul." This expression is borrowed from birth, and implies the vicarious sufferings of Christ for man. The word *vicarious* (like viceroy, who represents the king, and vicar, who anciently held his parish for the benefit of a monastery) is full of the idea of taking another's place, acting for another's benefit. But there are some who despise the very

notion of vicarious sacrifice; who deny not only the justice, but the possibility of Christ's being afflicted for our advantage, and dying that we might live. If you ever meet such a caviller, ask him where his eyes are. One would think he dropped out of another world. What are the pains by which our natural life is bought, but emblems of those deeper sorrows from which alone rises the spiritual life of man? The same lesson is everywhere around us. Not only do the lower animals bleed for our support, not only does the culprit languish in prison for our tranquillity, but men are generous and noble by willingly submitting to this great law. Did he never see the head of a family pinch himself and labour for its members?—never hear of gallant men, "marching with banner, and bugle, and fife, to the death for their native land?"—never admire the assertion of a heathen, that it was "sweet and fair to die for fatherland?"—never feel his eyes moisten with not inglorious tears, as he read of the self-immolation of Leonidas in the gap for Sparta, or Willoughby at Delhi for England. Indeed, he seems to be a bad judge both of what is possible and what is good, this wretched quibbler, who will raise his boisterous applause to the fireman that risks his life for an infant or a bed-ridden old woman, or to the swimmer that plunges into freezing water for a foolhardy skater, who had just been cautioned against his risk; but when he is told of *Christ*, who did exactly the same thing upon a grander scale and for a grander end, turns round with an idiotic pretence of wisdom upon his face, and sagely declares it impossible and unjust, and revolting to his moral consciousness.

Enter any cathedral and muse beside the ashes of heroes, read the daily papers, gaze upon the venerable face or the priceless portrait of your mother, and you will learn how well it became the greatest of mankind, the man in whom the God-head burned, to endure the keenest of all pangs to obtain the most unselfish of all prizes.

The travail of his soul! O! not from a chance emotion rose the star of hope upon a darkened world; not from such lavish and impulsive benevolence as sometimes leads a wealthy man to give largely, while yet he gives nothing that he cannot spare, but from the daily exposure to repulsive spite and hypocrisy, and moral foulness, of One who was of purer eyes than to behold iniquity;—from the ceaseless, gnawing, secret foreboding of a fearful fate which must not be avoided;—from the agony of treachery in a familiar friend, and of shameful desertion by his sworn adherents;—from the bloody sweat of brows that were wrung by direful apprehensions and pangs unknown to man;—from the trial, more intense by far than extremest physical torture,

even the birth-pangs, the *travail*, of the Messiah's soul, that great soul that embraced all mankind in its extended arms—from these the salvation of our ruined world was born!

Reader, you must reckon as the birthday of your soul, not the date of anything you ever did, or others ever did on your behalf;—not baptism, nor confirmation, nor the first consciousness of faith in your own soul, but that great Easter Sunday, when Christ broke the chains of death, and entered upon his new life for us. And what is the fruit of that agony and triumph, of the precious death and burial, of the glorious resurrection and ascension? There is no man anywhere whom Christ has not enlightened, there is no pleasure anywhere that is not owing to his death. The innocent mirth of children, the pure espousals of Christian man and maid, the sanctities of happy homes, a mother's unfathomable love, and a father's far-reaching hopes, the warm fireside in winter, the shade of summer woods, the ripeness of autumnal fruitage, all come to us from Him. But these are only the blossom: where is the fruit of the tree of life? Every pure and holy thought that comes to the sinner like a gentle air when the storm of passion has died out; every melting and relenting of an obdurate heart; every memory of a happier time; whatever saves the mere moralist from open sin, and the open sinner from atrocity and vileness—these come from God, and were bought with the Redeemer's blood; yet are they only means to lead them up to something higher, which is the end; that end is the recovery of sin-smitten souls, the reclamation of our affections for the divine family, the restoration of mutual confidence between God and man.

If that work has begun in my ransomed soul, I am part of the travail of Christ's soul. I and the converted Hottentot and South Sea Islander; one standing in the foremost files of time, and one that "just knows, and knows no more, his Bible true;" the enlightened Protestant, and the Romanist who barely struggles through the trammels of his creed, and feels and clings to one sufficient Saviour—we, and the men we denounce, and who denounce us in return, as too narrow or too broad, too high or too low, too cloudy or too mystical, but who hold the Head amid all minor errors,—we are all one in Christ Jesus, and he hath begotten us again unto a lively hope. We are the travail of his soul.

We shall know better the meaning of these words in that coming day, that eternal noon, to which all our moving twilight slowly tends, when we shall wake up after his likeness and be satisfied, when we shall see his face, and around his throne the four-and-twenty elders sitting, and around them the one hundred and forty and four thousand

of the tribes of Israel, and around them the multitude that none can number, clothed in white, singing the songs and stirred with the raptures of the paradise of God, and owing every moment and every pulse of their eternal gladness to his cross and passion. O! can we wonder that He shall be satisfied?

This is our second topic.

II. "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied;" and the next words put the meaning beyond all doubt: "By the knowledge of him shall my righteous servant justify many." So then the reward of his labours will not be dealt out with a niggardly or a stinted hand. It is not a little flock, it is not a handful or a residue that shall go to the right hand in that great day of separation. No, God be praised! His Church will not be for ever left as a cottage in a vineyard, or a lodge in a garden of cucumbers. "Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: *all they* gather themselves together, they come to thee: . . . the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee. The multitude of camels shall cover thee; . . . all they from Sheba shall come." And he shall *see* them. So then, his work being done, the effect is not a matter of indifference to him. It is not as if he said, "Here is the door opened, let them enter or neglect as they think fit." It is very true that Jesus acted from a sense of duty; he came to do the will of God; he was obedient unto death; he asked: "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things?" But it is true also, that, for "the joy set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame;" and he watches, O how earnestly! for every sign of a ripening harvest in the field he sowed so well. Sometimes we complain of our poor lives below; we feel that life is lonely, or trivial, or rapid; its pleasures have lost their relish; we live on from habit more than from desire, there seems to be no meaning, and no grandeur in existence. But there is a grandeur and an import. There is a sleepless eye fixed upon our concerns, so petty in themselves, so majestic when associated with Him (as the tremor of a magnetic needle is not slight when it affects a noble ship), and every small temptation we overcome, every obscure duty we perform in faith, every minute sacrifice we offer up in love, is a drop that swells the mighty cup of infinite satisfaction that shall at last be filled brimfull for Christ. This is what gives real and unspeakable dignity to the lowliest Christian life. To us, and to us only,

"Life is real, life is earnest,
And the grave is not its goal."

"Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God?"

But we cannot help thinking that there is a shade, at least, of severer meaning in the text. Think, if you are neglecting Christ and his salvation, the time may come when his heart will cease to yearn for you, when his large affection will be filled up without containing you, when the chamber that is lit with the light of love shall be fully peopled, and you left in outer darkness! The door shall be shut. He shall be satisfied, and when he has stretched out his hand all day, and the night has come, you shall seek him in the morning, but you shall not find him. In that hour the fountain of all hope and happiness would be dried up for you for ever.

To God's own people, however, it opens a glimpse into a future of boundless rapture. Read his prayers for his people and their happiness, and then think how it will be with us when Jesus shall see us and be content.

He willed that we should be with him where he is. Therefore, this text promises heaven. No matter how faltering our steps, if he has set his love upon us, we shall mount up on wings as eagles; no matter how dim our eyes, we shall see the Son of Man standing at the right hand of power.

He said, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." Therefore, this text promises holiness. The time is coming when sin shall

cease to dazzle, to allure, or to surprise us; when we shall be glorious, not having spot nor wrinkle, nor any such thing; when the last enemy shall be subdued, and as he that hath called us is holy, so shall we be holy.

He said, "That they all may be one; . . . I in them, and thou in me." Therefore, this text promises union with each other, and the Lord Jesus, and the Father; the clearing up of every quarrel, the absorption of all sects and parties, the indwelling of the Lord of glory.

And whatever else there is that boundless love would fain bestow on us; whatever the Spirit of Christ has ever taught us to request or to desire, all is assured to us, as strongly as the most explicit promise could assure it, in the assertion that Jesus himself shall desire no more.

But when all is said, and when we have taken the largest account of the vast difference between what we are and what we hope to be, material enough remains for profound gratitude, and the deepest emotion, in the thought of Christ being *satisfied with us*, whom he had to raise out of the dust of sin, and whose righteousness is all his own. Yet is not that the secret of our acceptance? No doubt his full approval will keep time with our final renouncement and abhorrence of ourselves, and our consent to be clad in no other vesture than the white linen that is washed in our Saviour's blood.

SECRETS.

AS a general rule, "a secret," as secrets are understood in society, is a very silly thing. Not in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, but in nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand, it is something so unimportant that the knowledge of it by the whole world could create no possible mischief, or even embarrassment, and which is told "in confidence" for the mere purpose of investing it with consequence. When otherwise, it is simply some matter which it is not wise or necessary to make known to the public at that time, and which the narrator, therefore, could, and ought, to keep to himself altogether until the proper occasion comes when it is to be no secret. In other words, it is a thing which a foolish person makes "a secret" of by telling it to some other person, but which a sensible person does not speak of at all.

Some people are afflicted with a desire for telling "secrets," for mentioning everything "in confidence." There is not, of necessity, any harm in such people: they are only, for the most part, persons born with a large organ of secretiveness, who have, therefore, a peculiar pleasure in whis-

pering everything which they might speak aloud, and relating to their friends, by one at a time, matters which might, with less trouble, be told to a dozen. In fact, many apparently very candid persons, who profess the greatest openness, and even seem occasionally to expose themselves to the charge of indiscretion, have at heart much more of the spirit of duplicity than some of these honest folks. Yet they are rather troublesome in society; and sensible people, in general, avoid being the recipients of their "confidences." As a principle, too, young persons should be advised to be cautious of contracting friendships with them; since, beside the fact that their "confidences" (which would be perfectly harmless if they were not "confidences") become often extremely embarrassing, simply from that circumstance, there are other reasons why they are not always safe, or, at least, useful companions.

In the first place, the constant custom of prefacing statements and narrations, or of having them prefaced, with, "Be sure you don't mention it," is apt to destroy that proper spirit of general reticence, which all should cultivate who wish to walk wisely and honourably through the world:

that rational secrecy which should be observed regarding our own concerns and our own opinions, and, more especially, regarding the opinions and concerns of others. Every day, and every hour, words are spoken in our hearing, and circumstances come to our knowledge, directly and indirectly, which it would be just as treacherous in us to repeat, or tell of, as though we had taken a vow not to do so. A general determination to make nothing that occurs, in our association with our friends or acquaintances, public, which could make mischief, which we are sure they would not wish to have known, or which might be calculated to present their dispositions or actions in an unfair light, keeps us from perpetrating this treachery. But when we have been in the habit of making and receiving promises of secrecy on special occasions, and concerning special communications, we shall be liable to the belief that it is the breach of promise only which constitutes dishonour and bad faith; and find ourselves falling into the accompanying habit of speaking without reserve everything which we have not pledged ourselves to withhold.

As an example: A friend, perhaps under strong excitement, says some harsh things to us of another friend. Did he relate any circumstance concerning that friend to us "in confidence," as it is called, we should, if we possessed a spark of honour, keep the confidence inviolably: but as he has not spoken in such a manner, we forget that honour, in the abstract, bids us to regard his words as being quite as much in confidence, and we preserve no reticence whatever on the subject. All our mutual acquaintances know that such a person has received some very great affront or injury from such another person, and has spoken very harshly of him in consequence. I shall not dwell on the mischief that may result from our indiscretion, or the good that might have arisen from our prudence; of the danger of a lasting quarrel in the one case, or the hope of speedy peace and forgiveness in the other. No doubt, a consideration of the hurtfulness or innocence of anything said to us, or in our hearing, must, in most cases, regulate our conduct as regards reticence, and would add weight in such a case as that mentioned. But, though the chance of mischief-making increases the treachery, it does not create it. The words being spoken before us as an outpouring of wounded feeling, not as a deliberate statement which the speaker was prepared to adhere to, should make them as sacred as the most confidential appeal could do. We may feel convinced, on the very best grounds, that no publicity we could give to the words would make the breach wider, or no reserve help to knit up the broken friendship; yet, till the words are not, perhaps, those in which he would

have vented his complaint to the world at large, or reproached his offending friend; therefore they were as exclusively for our ear as though he had made the most strict condition of our not repeating them.

Again: a person, with whom we are on terms of familiar acquaintance, betrays, in conversation with us, some littleness or weakness not generally exhibited to the world: an unreasonable expectation, or harmless vanity, or something of a similar nature. Here, also, honour bids us not to betray the foible. In dropping before us the veil with which we all cover the follies which we all possess, he has, in effect, declared his general confidence in our good will and good faith, in our sympathy with his feelings, our respect for his understanding, and our indulgence towards his weakness; yet, it is much to be feared that, in such cases, the silly custom of having silence bespoken on specific occasions makes many forget all that honour dictates. They forget that the reliance was just as strong as though a promise had been exacted, and that, in betraying the reliance, they are just as wrong as they would be in breaking the promise: so a friend's trust is violated without compunction.

Again: a person becomes acquainted with a matter of business belonging to another person. Here the reticence must, for the most part, be altogether regulated by circumstances. That business which is mentioned unreservedly before even only two or three people, must generally be one which there is no intention of, or necessity for, being silent about. If, indeed, it concerns any one else, instead of the person mentioning it, and we have reason to question his discretion or honesty in making it the subject of conversation; or if we feel sure that the two or three persons before whom it has been spoken of, are those alone to whom the speaker would open his mind on the subject; or if it involves any person not a party to the telling of it at that time, we should consider ourselves bound to preserve silence. If it has come to our knowledge indirectly—unless it be something which a higher moral duty compels us to disclose, and, happily, few of us become cognisant of such "secrets"—we, as right-minded persons, should regard no promise as more obligatory on us than the simple fact that we did learn it indirectly. These are only a few out of the numberless cases in which the duty of reticence is liable to be overlooked, because of the substitution of a particular for a general observance.

In the next place, any two persons regarding each other as mutual confidantes, although they may, in cases like the foregoing, preserve proper reticence towards the world generally, will fall into the wrong of speaking to each other much which



(Drawn by F. M. WIMPERIS.)

"I was the king and she was the queen ;
And thus we spent the hours."—p. 731.

they should not; either commenting unreservedly on the conduct and character of other friends and acquaintances, or relating circumstances concerning them; either of which "confidences" is equally unjustifiable. They forget that "evil speaking" is evil speaking all the same, though it be spoken only to one; and that when a "talebearer" is stigmatised as a "revealer of secrets," it is not specified what number of individuals he should reveal them to in order to deserve the name. We do not do as much harm to a person by our strictures on his actions, or our surmises as to his motives, when they are only spoken to a "bosom friend," as if they were proclaimed to society at large; neither would the person, in most cases, be as much mortified by having a secret concerning him told to one person as to twenty; yet we equally depart from the principle of integrity in doing so. Notwithstanding which, numbers of people seem to consider themselves perfectly justified in giving unlimited confidence to some individual, not merely upon their own, but other people's affairs. This, I am sorry to say, is a very common fault of married people. Husbands and wives, instead of limiting the rule that they "should have no secrets from each other" to having no secrets of their own, extend it into having no secrets of any one else's. The wisdom of married people in accepting confidences which they cannot or ought not to communicate to each other is a different thing; but, once the confidence is accepted, there is no more moral right to reveal it to the wife or husband than to any one else: while, even in cases where no positive confidence has been accepted, the instances are numberless in which reticence concerning other people should be as strictly observed between husband and wife as between any two persons else. A very foolish idea, that what is called mutual confidence in the married state implies the reading of each other's letters, cannot be too strongly condemned. I have never known an instance of a couple commencing upon this system (and I have known many) in which it did not end in one of two things: either the friends and relatives at either side, perceiving their trust betrayed, grew, first angry, and then resentful and contemptuous; and the married pair, after involving themselves and their respective families and acquaintances in numerous quarrels, found themselves at last shunned and disliked as a couple of gossiping, tattling fools; or else, in trying to avoid this, they were driven into real duplicity towards each other. Correspondences had to be carried on surreptitiously, and all sorts of subterfuges had to be resorted to in the sending and receiving of letters, creating, when discovered, as they are sure to be, mutual distrust and bad feeling; just because two people could

not perceive that good faith in their conjugal relations did not of necessity mean bad faith in all their other relations, and that perfect unreserve upon their own concerns did not include perfect unreserve upon everybody else's concerns. I need scarcely say, however, that this compact of "secrets no secrets" is much more unwarrantable, as well as more mischievous, between any other two persons than between husband and wife.

One more evil of this habit is, that it creates a sin, and leads to the commission of it. The secrets confided are, for the most part, as I have said, so completely unimportant, that there could be no possible harm in the telling of them, except the breaking of the promise; therefore, not only is the promise not unfrequently broken, even when there had been an intention of keeping it, but it is often given with the deliberate resolve of not keeping it; in which case it constitutes a falsehood. The confidante makes a mental condition dependent on the nature of the confidence to be reposed in him, and becomes as unscrupulous about the breaking of such promises, when he believes no general harm can come of doing so, as he is about revealing matters—however important, and however much the harm that may ensue from the revelation—which he has not been bound to keep secret by any promise.

The minor evils, or rather inconveniences of the custom, it ought to be unnecessary to dwell upon. Almost every one must have experienced the uncomfortable feeling produced by living with people who are always having little mysteries, petty conspiracies, small reservations, and secrecies, as trifling as they are unnecessary; and the few who have, happily, never had actual experience of it may imagine the disagreeable sensation. The impossibility of being candid oneself, or of believing in the candour of any of those around; the inevitable impression of being always under an espionage; of being encircled by the members of a little inquisitorial system; of being the subject of unceasing "confidences," and the object of no confidence; together with the dread of sometimes unconsciously inducing people to betray those "confidences" to you, make time spent among friends (?) of this description no pleasant thing. How different from the happiness of that circle of friends or relatives, where the honour, integrity, and good sense of each member is so well known to the other, that there never arises the necessity of exacting a promise "not to tell." It need only be added, perhaps, that, although this custom often prevails among men of little minds, it is among women, and especially young women, that it is most frequently seen; and that it is, in some degree, the result of some of the more prominent faults in female education.

PRIMROSE TIME AND SNOW TIME.

I.

EVEN the dead leaves, old and brown,
Were warm with the April sun;
And merry and bright, with their yellow
light,

The primroses, every one.
Lit up the dappled hazle-stems,
The moss, and the cuckoo-flowers.
How little Cousin Madge and I
Laughed out to see the showers.
With the rainbow gleaming violet and green,
As we bound each other with daisy-chains—
I was the king and she was the queen;
And thus we spent the hours.

II.

Leaves were turning, and summer was gone.
In bunches brown and spiked
The filberts grew, and, a merry crew,
We plundered where'er we liked.
While others carolled, and danced, and sung,
I drew dear Madge aside;

And round her waist my hand I laced
With a chosen lover's pride.
In her gentle eyes I turned to look,
I saw love hiding there.
A kiss she gave and a kiss I took;
Then came a word through the trembling air
And she was my plighted bride.

III.

I stood beside her closing grave,
But a single hour ago;
The leaves fell dead, and overhead
Bickered the ceaseless snow.
White, white it fell on the new-turned earth,
Pure as her parted soul;
With shuddering gasps of bursting tears,
I heard the death-bell toll.
No more for me the primrose time,
My heart lies confined there;
Sorrow's tempest and age's rime
Alone I must suffer and bear,
Until I reach my goal.

WALTER THORNBURY.

THE HALF-SISTERS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "DEEPDALE VICARAGE," "MARK WARREN," ETC.

CHAPTER XLIII.

MR. HECTOR CHILLINGHAM was at his place of business the next morning as usual. Though "nothing was doing," as Mr. Plumstead observed, yet the richest manufacturer in Workstone made a point of being at his post all the same. He had, to be sure, abandoned the little back room, and was now sitting amid the glories of the grander apartment, his *Times* newspaper in his hand. He had been reading—not much for his comfort, I fear—a sad detail of failures and stoppages, and also a leading article on the ominous subject, the panic.

Yes, it had come to that—the panic.

There was not much fear of interruption at his business hours. Formerly, he had scarce a minute in the day that he could call his own; but now the stagnation in trade kept off buyers, and sellers too. So Mr. Chillingham had his day pretty much to himself. To his surprise, however, the clerk, who had been yawning at his door this hour past, and surreptitiously getting snatches of the last new novel, concealed under his desk, announced a visitor—a visitor, as it happened, that Mr. Chillingham would have gone some miles to avoid.

Mr. Clarence Hargraves was the name on the card handed to him.

Mr. Chillingham shrank back into his chair; yet he could not escape from his doom. Ere he had time to

frame any excuse, the cheerful voice of Clarence Hargraves was in his ear.

"Well, Mr. Chillingham, and how are you this fine morning? Pleasant weather, isn't it?"

"I think it is," replied Mr. Chillingham, rising, and offering his hand.

"Bless me! how cold you feel!" cried Clarence, good-humouredly. "That is the worst of you sedentary men; and you don't look well, either. You should get out this summer. A run to the sea-side would set you up."

"I think perhaps it would."

His fingers were twitching restlessly at the paper in his hand.

"I am sure I should go. I hear there is very little doing just now."

"Not just now, there is not."

He spoke uneasily, and his fingers kept on twitching. "Is trade likely to improve?" asked Clarence, with some anxiety.

"Oh, dear yes! I hope so."

"I hear there is a panic in the city. Is that true, Mr. Chillingham?"

Mr. Chillingham laughed: a queer, hollow laugh it was, too.

"There is a depression in trade, such as we are subject to, now and then," he replied. "It is a good time to buy shares, and sell when the market gets up again."

"You think the market will go up, then?"

Mr. Chillingham laughed again. "Pardon, me. You are very inexperienced to ask such a question. Of course it will."

"And trade be as good as ever?"

"As good as ever."

Clarence leaned back in his chair with an air of satisfaction.

"There is some comfort in that; but really I have been very uneasy. I hear such ugly reports. And now that bit of money is invested in trade, why I don't sleep quite so sound as I used to do. It's foolish, perhaps, but I don't."

"I am very sorry for that; but, of course, the evil is soon remedied," replied Mr. Chillingham, calmly.

"Indeed, I wish it was. In fact, I have come this morning to consult you about it. I wish I had invested in land!"

"I thought you objected to the low rate of interest."

"So I did; but then there was the security. I am reconciled to the interest, now that I see the terrible risks of trade. I should not like to lose my money, Mr. Chillingham."

"Do you actually imagine there is the least danger?"

"Indeed I do, from all I hear in the town. Not that it would be your fault," added Clarence, good-naturedly. "Of course no man can stand against a panic like this."

"On my word, Mr. Hargraves, you quite amuse me. As if a slight fluctuation could seriously affect a man of capital. Why, I have stood my ground through a worse crisis than this."

"Have you?"

"Of course I have, and shall do again. But if you are uneasy about your money——"

"I really am—there is no denying it," interrupted Clarence, eagerly. "You see I am a lazy dog. I could not work. I should not like to beg. My money is, therefore, of great service to me."

"Will you like to draw it out?"

"Could I? That was what I came to ask."

"Of course you could. It would be foolish of you, and would imply a want of confidence in me; but you shall do as you choose."

Clarence Hargraves was silent a few minutes. Then he said, "I should be grieved to annoy you, Mr. Chillingham, but indeed it would be an untold relief to my mind, if you would allow me to have it back."

"Certainly—certainly; there is no let or hindrance. When should you like it?"

"At your convenience. Of course, I could not expect, at a moment's notice, such a sum——"

"Such a sum! My good fellow, it is a mere item, just nothing at all. You can have it when you choose."

"Thank you; I dare say I am very foolish. But if it is really of so little consequence, you will not miss it."

"I shall not miss it."

"Then I will say to-morrow."

"Exactly, it shall be to-morrow morning. I only stipulate that you do not consult me again."

"I hope I have not offended you, Mr. Chillingham. You gentlemen who coin money almost by a touch, can't quite understand what it is to be deficient in such an enviable faculty. I should be in actual distress if I lost that bit of money."

Mr. Chillingham bowed stiffly. "Have you any further commands for me this morning?" he asked, in a freezing tone.

"None whatever. But do shake hands; I shall be so sorry if I have vexed you."

"I am not vexed in the least—how can I be? Trifles like these are always happening when one has to do with youth and inexperience. Good morning, Mr. Hargraves," and he laid his hand on the bell, as a sign of dismissal.

"There has been a gentleman here, sir, this half-hour," said the clerk, after he had let Clarence Hargraves out; "he said he would not go till he had seen you."

"Who is it? what is his name?" asked Mr. Chillingham, nervously.

"He had not a card, sir; he said his name was Westbury."

"Westbury—Westbury? I don't know any such person. However, I suppose I must see him," said Mr. Chillingham, wearily.

The clerk disappeared, and a minute after, there entered Mr. Westbury.

He stood on the threshold of the room, his hat in his hand. His face—an open face, and an honest face too—confronted that of Mr. Chillingham. Mr. Chillingham's look sank before it. He felt afraid from the first of Mr. Westbury. "Ah," thought he, "whoever he is, he comes for no good."

"I have to apologise for this intrusion, Mr. Chillingham. I am, personally, a stranger to you."

"Quite a stranger; I never remember having the pleasure of seeing you," replied Mr. Chillingham, politely. "Pray be seated."

"Thank you; I will sit down a few minutes," and, taking a chair, he placed himself just opposite the manufacturer. "I come on a little matter of business."

"Indeed! Well, I shall have great pleasure in giving you my attention, Mr. Westbury."

"Thank you. It is not my own affairs I have come about; my business relates to a young lady."

"Dear me! quite a confession!" said Mr. Chillingham, smiling.

"Oh, it is not that," said Mr. Westbury, bluntly. "Her father was my particular friend; and, though it is not generally known, I am in reality one of her guardians. He appointed me to the office when on his deathbed, but I have never acted in that capacity. In fact, I have had no occasion."

"And are you wishing to act now?"

"Yes, I am."

"Your right is legal and sound, I suppose?"

"Well, it is sound, if not strictly legal. Her uncle was sole trustee; but Sophy was committed to my

care and protection as well. Her father's last words were to that effect."

"Sophy—Sophy!" He turned pale, and his manner of repeating the name was uneasy and alarmed.

"Yes. I think you know her quite well; she is your niece—Sophy Hensman."

Mr. Chillingham slowly drew his hand across his forehead.

"Now my reason for calling upon you is this," continued Mr. Westbury, in a blunt, straightforward manner: "I am not quite easy in my mind about Miss Hensman's affairs."

"I can scarcely understand what right you have to make that observation, Mr. Westbury."

"It does sound rather strange, I confess; but the truth is, that my friend, Mr. Hensman, being of a cautious nature, had invested Sophy's fortune in the funds. Now I find that the money has been withdrawn."

"Withdrawn?"

"Yes. I am watchful of Sophy's interests. It would grieve me sorely should any harm befall her. Pray can you give me an explanation?"

"Certainly I can. I am Sophy's legal guardian; her property is in my hands until she comes of age. I am employing the interim in increasing it. I can do better for her than the funds."

"Then you have put it in your business?"

"I have."

Mr. Westbury paused a moment. He looked steadily at Mr. Chillingham. Mr. Chillingham tried to return the look, but failed.

"I am sorry for it," said Mr. Westbury, at length; "you must have been aware that, by the terms of Mr. Hensman's will, such a proceeding on your part was illegal."

"You use strange terms to me, Mr. Westbury!"

"I use plain language, because I am a plain man, and like to come to the point at once. I repeat, it was illegal. By the terms of the will any such investment was strictly provided against."

"Have you seen the will?" asked Mr. Chillingham, hastily.

"Yes; and there is a clause which expressly forbids that Sophy's money should be taken out of the funds. Mr. Hensman had considerable experience of the fluctuating nature of investments in general, and he wished Sophy to be secure. Now what security can she have in the present state of the money market?"

Mr. Chillingham did not answer; again his look fell before the steady, straightforward gaze of the other.

"Now," continued Mr. Westbury, "I am anxious to spare you, Mr. Chillingham, on account of your age and your position, from a public exposure. You have laid yourself open to an action at law; you must be aware that you have."

He was still silent. What could he say? In some cases retribution comes after a lapse of years; in other cases it is swift to punish.

Retribution had been swift to punish Mr. Chillingham. It was a crime he had committed, look at it as he might, and call it by what name he chose. The world would call it robbery or embezzlement! His head sunk on his breast. All his courage and his boastfulness were gone; for Mr. Westbury did not know the worst. What would he say if he were told that Sophy's money was gone—absolutely gone? An abyss had not swallowed it more completely than the broken, ruined fortunes of Hector Chillingham!

"Now," again began Mr. Westbury, "I have an alternative to offer you. I do not think it would be reasonable in you to refuse it. Either I take the law against you, in behalf of Sophy, or you refund the money. Of course I shall not expect the whole of such a sum to be repaid without sufficient time. I will give you time. But the first instalment must be paid to-morrow."

"Paid to-morrow," repeated Mr. Chillingham, mechanically.

"Yes. I am sorry to appear harsh or rude, but in a crisis such as this, Sophy may be beggared in a week. As it is, I fear she will be the loser."

"Why should she be the loser?"

He spoke mechanically, and as if merely to gain a short reprieve.

"Because this panic is likely to be the ruin of Workstone. But few of our manufacturers will be able to outlive the storm."

"And why may not I be one of them?"

"Pardon me, if I doubt it. There are rumours afloat which lead me to think the contrary."

Mr. Chillingham bit his lip, and was silent. Was it even so? Had the tidings of his coming doom got bruited abroad already?

He sat silent a few minutes, chewing the cud of bitter reflections. Then he said, "I accept your terms, Mr. Westbury. I will be ready for you to-morrow."

"Very well. I shall see you at twelve o'clock to-morrow morning. Were it on my own account, I would not press thus hard; but it is imperative upon me to save some portion of Sophy's fortune from the wreck."

Mr. Chillingham rose, and so did Mr. Westbury. They did not offer to shake hands, or exchange any of the usual civilities. They bowed slightly to each other, and then Mr. Westbury departed. The clerk in attendance, cut short in a sensational passage, popped his book in his desk, and let the visitor out. After which, he returned to the thread of the narrative, and read on without any further interruption.

CHAPTER XLIV.

"HELEN, I am getting so home-sick! We have been travelling about for two whole years, and I am pining to see your dear good face again, my darling. Do you know, Archibald and I are coming home next week? He has taken that nice house you can just see from our top windows, and we are going to live there. It is only a mile off, and I want you to come

every day. Oh, Helen, in one week—one single week, I shall hold you in my arms. You are all I have in the——”

Here the letter broke off, abruptly. Helen kissed it again and again. When she had kissed it, she opened a drawer in her desk, and put it in a little packet of other letters, which lay there, tied up with silk, and fragrant with rose-leaves. Helen had been used to scatter rose-leaves over the pages she received from Dolores.

Sometimes she took out the letters, and read them from the beginning to the end. It was two years since Dolores had been away, and these were the tidings she had been used to receive from her. The first few letters were gay and buoyant. She was very happy, she said, as rich as possible, and Archibald was so kind. He let her do just as she liked, and whatever she wanted she had only to ask for. And they had been to Spain, dear sunny Spain! Was it not good of Archibald to take her?

For some months the letters ran in this strain; but then a change had taken place. Helen's quick eye had noted it. Archibald's name gradually dropped out, and there were vague hints that a cloud was spreading over the sky which had been so radiant. She was tired, she said in one letter, of her life!

That was the strongest expression used, and it cut Helen to the heart.

She looked older and sadder for these two years that had gone. She had one grief, that seemed as if sapping the foundation of her life. Not a word had she received from Joyce—not a word, and she had written to him again and again. She had told him how she was hungering for the news of his safety and well-being. She knew he had not forgotten her. She could have staked her life on his integrity and faithfulness. But he did not write. This was a broad spreading sorrow that threatened to engulf her. For the rest, she lived on, in hope. There were few who cared about her; few who came to see her, except Sophy Hensman. Sophy appeared in these days to be her only friend. The two girls, or rather the girl and the woman, had grown to love each other very dearly. Sophy would spend whole days with Helen. They would walk together, read together, work together. She was more with Helen now than with Mrs. Cranstead; for Mrs. Cranstead's grief had soured her, and Sophy's gentle ways failed to soothe her, as they had done once. And the squire looked careworn, and people said he was breaking up, and neither of them wished for visitors, not even Sophy.

Sophy was spending a few days with Helen. She was happily unconscious of what had transpired. She did not know that Mr. and Mrs. Chillingham had gone to London, ostensibly to see a sick relation, but in reality to effect their escape from the doom that was hanging over them.

The news of Mr. Chillingham having failed, and absconded, had by this time spread over Workstone. Helen had heard it from the lips of Mr. Westbury.

Early that morning he had called to see Miss Percival, and to ask her to break the news to Sophy.

Helen had promised to undertake the painful task; and, now that she had just put her letter in her desk, she was thinking how best she should do it.

And, amid her grief for Sophy, was a deep undercurrent of joy at the prospect of seeing Dolores; once more to hold her in her arms; to kiss the bright face, and stroke the shining hair—to have back again her own Dolores! Delicious tears they were which Helen wiped away as she thought of it. She wiped them away quickly. Sophy's glad voice was singing in the passage. A moment after, she came in, her hat in her hand.

“Now, Helen,”—she always called her Helen, in these days—“we can go, if you please. It will be getting too hot if we wait any longer. I suppose that gentleman has gone.”

“Oh, yes, he is gone,” replied Helen, quickly.

“That is right. We will have such a nice ramble. I suppose I must go back to my aunt Chillingham's this afternoon.”

Sophy did not seem much to relish the idea.

Helen looked graver still at this remark. She was thinking of what she had to do.

“Oh, I am sure I shall make you go! You never get out, unless I am here to take you. I have planned such a delightful walk down by the river-side, and my uncle won't come home to dinner till five o'clock. I shall be in plenty of time for that.”

Helen looked graver still at this remark.

“Come, do get ready! Shall I fetch your bonnet?”

“Oh, no,” replied Helen, starting, as if from a dream. “I will get ready.” And she went slowly up-stairs to her room.

It would be better, perhaps, to do it out of doors, in that sweet spot to which they were going. It was a favourite resort of the two girls, when Sophy came to spend the day with Helen—a clump of trees by the river-side, with a smooth green meadow spreading itself around them. Haymakers would be in the meadow to-day, and the birds would be singing, and the river sparkling, and all Nature gay with her summer holiday. Here, in this peaceful spot, away from the noise of the city, she would tell Sophy.

She did not know, as yet, how she could tell her. It would be hard to explain to her that, as far as this world went, she had lost her all. She felt sure it would be a terrible piece of business. She could not imagine how Sophy would bear it. In fact, nothing had so distressed the tender heart of Helen, save her own most bitter sorrows—her sister's marriage and the separation from Joyce.

The two girls sauntered along the lane—that grassy lane where Dolores had so often met with Archibald Cranstead.

“It is one of my bright days, Helen, to-day. Everything looks so beautiful!” And the young face, beaming with enthusiasm, was raised to Helen.

Helen returned the look with one of affection;

but her answer was not much to the point. It was merely a few words spoken at random.

She began to throw out vague hints about the panic, and the gloomy state of things in Workstone; but her attempt on this head failed. Sophy laughed cheerfully.

"Oh, the panic will not affect my uncle—not a single bit! He is too rich for that. My uncle is the wealthiest man in the city."

"And yet, dear,"—Helen drew her nearer as she spoke—"yet there are men as rich as your uncle whom this panic has ruined."

"Miss Percival, you don't imagine that anything

is the matter?" asked Sophy, anxiously. "Why do you look so grave? Have you heard anything?"

Helen was silent.

"Pray tell me, if you have. I shall scarcely believe it then. I know my uncle is more than able to hold his ground—far more. What have you heard?"

Very tenderly, and very cautiously dropped the words from Helen's lips. But they were terrible words, soften them as she might. One bald, naked fact stared Sophy in the face—a fact that, for a few moments, struck her dumb with horror. Mr. Hector Chillingham was a bankrupt!

(To be continued.)

A SUNBEAM IN THE HOUSE.

LITTLE Emily Lee was the youngest child of a family which, a year before her birth, had left the south of England to occupy a small farm of about twenty acres in one of the Channel Islands. Her father, who was an honest, hardworking man, strove with all his might to provide for the needs of his household; yet he sometimes failed to earn enough to keep them above want.

One year, through the failure of the potato crop, they became so poor that two of the eldest children, who were boys of nine and ten years of age, were obliged, instead of going to school, to hire themselves out to work in their neighbours' fields or orchards for a few pence a day. And Emily, then only four years old, used to go with her mother to the seashore, which was not far from the spot where they lived; and while the little lively girl, forgetful of hunger, amused herself with shells and shingle, her mother gathered limpets from the rocks to help to make up their evening meal.

But this poor family, few as their home-comforts, and many as their hardships were, seldom seemed to be really sad. Strangers going into their dwelling, and seeing their coarse fare, their scanty clothing, and their barely-furnished house, would be surprised to see their cheerful looks, and to hear their merry voices, when collected together around the domestic hearth.

But those who knew them better would understand it all. "Ah!" they would say, "how can there be gloom in a house where there is real piety, and where, too, such a little darling lives as Emmy Lee? She is the light of the house, enlivening every one around her."

And such indeed she was. Everybody loved her. She had auburn hair, light blue eyes, and a fair face with rosy cheeks, which you could not help wishing to kiss whenever you saw them. But it must be confessed that Emmy was a sly little puss, and often played many funny tricks. One day, she was left alone in the kitchen while her mother went to fetch some water from the garden well. Instead of running after her mother, as she usually did

wherever she went, she stayed behind. Emmy had espied a pink-coloured box, which she thought very pretty, on the chimney-piece; and, as soon as her mother went out with her pail, she pushed her high chair close to the fender, climbed upon it, and reached the little box. Opening it, she found some dark, round lozenges, and helping herself to two or three soon swallowed them.

When her mother came back, she found her still standing on the chair; she took her down hastily, fearing lest she should fall into the fire, and trying to look crossly, she shook her, scolded her, and hugged her all at the same moment.

"Oh, do give me this pretty box," said Emmy; "I want to put my beads in it."

"Well, now," said her mother, smiling, "I see what you have been after; but I hope you have not taken any of those lozenges, for if you have they will make you ill."

The child, putting her thumb in her mouth, cast her eyes on the ground, but said nothing.

"There, never mind," said her mother; "you shall have the box as soon as it is empty; but go now, and meet Kate coming from school."

Springing out of her mother's arms, off she ran without her hat, her long bright hair flying with the wind behind her, and she was soon out of sight down the lane. Before she had got half-way to the school she met her sister. Katy was quite pleased to see her darling pet, as she used to call her, and catching hold of her hand, she kissed her over and over again. The two sisters, after coming home, asked their mother to let them go and play a little on the beach. They had their wish.

Kate was old enough to take care of her little sister, and she was so fond of her too, that her mother was sure she could be trusted with the child anywhere. But when dinner-time came, and they had not returned home, their mother began to feel very uneasy; so leaving her husband to get his dinner by himself, she went out to see what had become of them. She searched a long while, and shouted, "Kate!" as loud as she could, but no one answered.

Beginning to feel much alarmed, she was going

back to the house to fetch her husband to help her find the children, when as she was passing a cottage where a boatman lived, near the bay, she heard a loud tapping at the window, and Kate's voice calling, "Mother!" She instantly sped in at the open door, and saw both her little ones inside.

Kate was crying, and, pointing to little Emmy, she said, sobbing, "Oh, mother, I don't know what is the matter with poor Emmy; she has been so sick, and turned so dizzy, that she fell into the water while we were bathing our feet; and I had much trouble to get her out again. I then tried to carry her home, but she was so heavy, and I felt so frightened, I couldn't carry her any further than here."

"My poor child!" cried her mother, bending over the little girl as she was lying on a pillow near the fire, "I am very sorry I let you go out; you must have taken some of those lozenges, and they have made you so ill. But how thankful I am to you!" she said to the kind woman who had taken the child into her cottage, and did all she could to revive it.

The good woman answered that she had done no more than her duty, and hoped the dear child would soon be better.

But Emmy was still looking very white, and seemed almost stiff and motionless. Mrs. Lee sent Kate to tell her father what had happened, and then, with the help of her kind neighbour, she wrapped the child up in warm flannels before taking her home. Katy was soon back again with her father, who was deeply grieved to find his little darling in such a sad state. He then took her up gently, and carried her home in his big, strong arms. Immediately afterwards a doctor was sent for, and little Emmy in a few days got quite well again. How delighted the whole family was when little Emmy began to run about, and chatter and play again. More than ever then she was like a sunbeam in the

house. But if one more than another rejoiced at her recovery, it was her loving sister, Kate, who all the while little Emmy was ill appeared cheerless and dull indeed.

As Emmy grew older she grew wiser, but not less charming. She left off her childish frolics and her playful tricks. Still she was lively in her manners, and the house daily resounded with the sweet musical tones of her voice, singing, as her fond father used to say, like a nightingale. If only absent a few hours, she was missed, like something that could not well be spared even so short a time. And when her mother died, and Kate had left home to get married, Emmy was indeed, if possible, more than "a sunbeam" in her father's house. She was his chief earthly comfort and joy.

A married sister from Devonshire, being on a visit to him when he was ill, one day told him how surprised she was at finding him so cheerful and comfortable, with only such a young girl as his daughter to wait upon him, and do all the household work besides.

"Ah!" replied the sick man, with a smile, "I don't wonder that you can't help admiring my precious darling; I only wish you had such a good girl; you would have no complaints to make then. How different she is from your Betsy, and from many other girls we know in the town where you live! I don't know what I should now do without her. It is she who takes such good care of me and the house, and does all she can to supply her dear mother's place. It is she who sits here and reads to me God's blessed Word, and sings sweet hymns, and prays with me. O how thankful I am for such a good, loving daughter as she is to me! If all girls were like her, what cheerful, happy homes, they would make! She is indeed, as the neighbours say of her, 'a sunbeam in the house.'"

Are you a sunbeam, little reader?

"THE QUIVER" ORPHAN-HOME FUND.

TO OUR READERS.

About eight months have now passed since we made our first appeal to the readers of "The Quiver" in behalf of "THE QUIVER" ORPHAN FUND. They will be gratified to learn that their kind and united endeavours, so far, have resulted in the sum of £660.

The National Orphan Home, in support of which this fund has been instituted, is by no means so complete in all its departments as could be desired. There has long been an especial need of an Infirmary Ward, by means of which accommodation the sick children of the Home (and from so large a family as ninety girls it is evident that there must be some few afflicted ones needing special and separate care and attention) may be properly separated from the other inmates. To build and fit up completely such a ward, about £1,000 would be required, and as the main fund of the Institution is very low, the Committee cannot hope of themselves to do this for some time to come. In fact, it is for the readers of "The Quiver" to say whether the National Orphan Home shall have an Infirmary Ward or not. As we have already stated, £660 have been collected; consequently, to attain the desired object, another £340 will be wanted.

In view of this sum being completed, an architect is now being employed in designing a plan for a new building, to be called "THE QUIVER INFIRMARY WARD;" an engraving of which design shall, in due course, be placed before its generous supporters.

We, therefore, have much pleasure in issuing a further set of Collecting Papers, and have now only to leave the matter in the hands of our readers, with the pleasing confidence, gained from past experience, that we do not plead in vain; but that every one of us will delight in this manner to serve Him who willeth not "that one of His little ones should perish."